Organic Farming

3650. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the kind of encouragement given to the research and spread of knowledge with regard to organic farming;

(b) whether incentives are given to those farmers who have taken up organic farming as a mission; and

(c) the role of agriculture universities in encouraging organic farming?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) In order to standardize technology package for Organic Farming of important crops, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research has launched a network research programme at 13 centres of All India Coordinated Research Project on Cropping System Research with a financial allocation of Rs. 2.83 crores during Xth Plan. The Council is also imparting training, organizing workshops and field demonstrations to spread knowledge on organic farming in the country.

(b) During Tenth Plan, a National Project on Organic Farming has been initiated under which financial assistance is given to agencies for imparting training (@Rs. 13,000/-per course for a batch of 20 farmers), organizing field demonstrations on organic inputs (@Rs. 10,000/- per demonstration) and providing technology knowhow/advice (@Rs. 200/- per farmer/year).

(c) Organic farming has been including in course curricula of agricultural universities. Besides, universities are undertaking research, training and extension activities to promote organic farming.

Popularising local seeds among farmers of Vidarbha

3651. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the cotton farmers of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra are committing suicides because of unsuitable cotton seeds which are imported;

(b) whether there is any attempt made to give preference to the local seeds; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?